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Fertility: Overview, 2008

by Anne Milan

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Report on the Demographic Situation in Canada

Fertility: Overview, 2008

Demographic Analysis and Projections Section

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
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0^s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p}	preliminary
^{r}	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E}	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published

Fertility: Overview, 2008

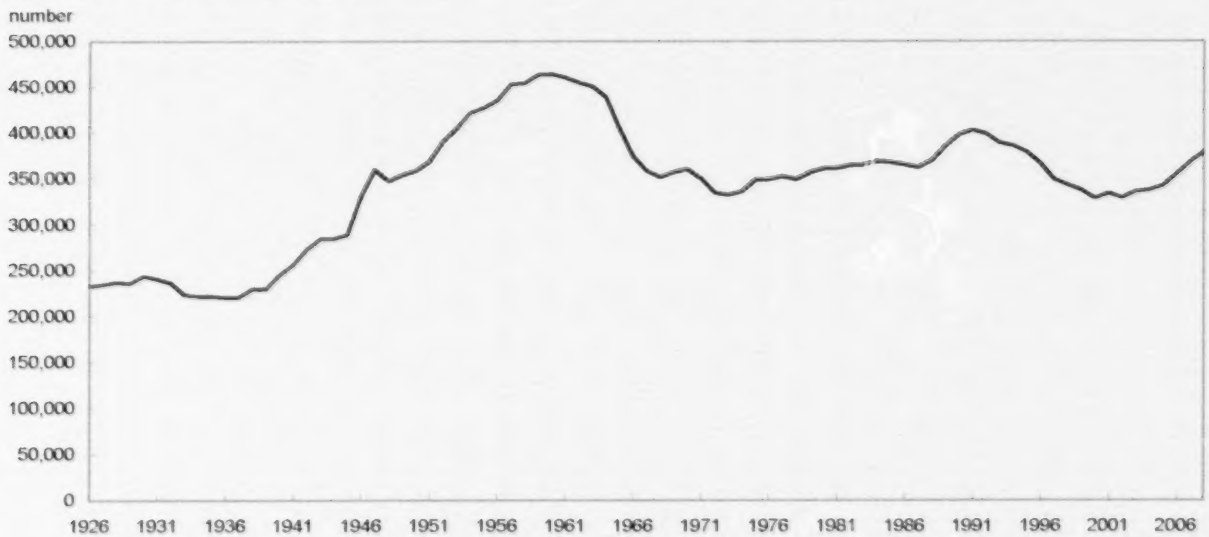
Number of births

This chapter examines fertility in Canada with a focus on the years 2006 to 2008. In addition to the number of births, indicators including the total fertility rate, average age of mother, parity and completed fertility are analysed. Historical trends, as well as provincial and territorial patterns will also be examined where appropriate.

In 2008, there were 377,900 babies born in Canada, up from 367,900 births in 2007 and 354,600 in 2006 (Figure 1). The number of births in 2008 was the highest recorded since 1995 and is the continuation of an annual increase beginning in 2003. The number of births has fluctuated over the past century. It was fairly low during the 1920s and 1930s, periods of the Great Depression and the Second World War. This was followed by an increase during the post-war baby boom between 1946 and 1965, peaking at 479,300 births in 1959. In the 1970s and much of the 1980s, there was a decline in the number of births rising again to 404,700 births in 1990—the highest number of the past two decades. Throughout the remainder of the 1990s the number of births fell, reaching 327,900 in 2000, the lowest number since 1945.

In 2007 and 2008, births increased across most provinces and one territory compared to 2006 (Table 1). Provincially, only Prince Edward Island had a slightly lower number of births in 2007 than 2006 but it increased again in 2008. Given the small number of births in the territories, there was some fluctuation in the patterns for the Yukon and Northwest Territories, although there was a steady increase for Nunavut. More recent birth data for British Columbia shows an increased number of births in 2009, continuing a trend begun in the early 2000s.[1] Quebec has disseminated provincial birth data for 2010 showing slightly fewer births compared to the previous year for the first time since

Figure 1
Births in Canada, 1926 to 2008



Source: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics.

1. British Columbia Vital Statistics, Birth-related statistics, Table 1: Live births, deaths, marriages and stillbirths, accessed May 11, 2011.

Table 1
Births and birth rates, Canada, provinces and territories, 1981 to 2008

Year	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.	Canada
	number													
1981	9,120	1,897	12,079	10,503	95,322	122,183	16,073	17,209	42,638	41,474	536	1,302	...	370,336
1986	7,618	1,928	12,358	9,788	84,634	133,882	17,009	17,513	43,744	41,967	483	1,507	...	372,431
1991	7,166	1,885	12,016	9,497	97,310	151,478	17,282	15,304	42,776	45,612	568	911	723	402,533
1992	6,918	1,850	11,874	9,389	96,146	150,593	16,590	15,004	42,039	46,156	529	852	702	398,643
1993	6,421	1,754	11,568	9,049	92,391	147,848	16,709	14,269	40,292	46,026	508	834	725	388,394
1994	6,339	1,716	11,099	8,978	90,578	147,068	16,480	14,038	39,796	46,998	442	824	756	385,114
1995	5,859	1,754	10,726	8,563	87,417	146,263	16,113	13,499	38,914	46,820	470	874	739	378,016
1996	5,747	1,694	10,573	8,176	85,226	140,012	15,478	13,300	37,851	46,138	443	815	747	366,200
1997	5,416	1,591	9,952	7,922	79,774	133,004	14,655	12,860	36,905	44,577	474	723	745	348,598
1998	4,994	1,504	9,595	7,885	75,856	132,618	14,461	12,777	37,905	43,072	396	681	667	342,418
1999	5,055	1,515	9,575	7,615	73,596	131,080	14,315	12,604	38,171	41,939	383	659	737	337,249
2000	4,869	1,441	9,116	7,347	72,007	127,408	14,090	12,140	37,006	40,672	370	673	727	327,882
2001	4,716	1,380	8,909	7,195	73,695	131,709	14,002	12,275	37,619	40,575	344	613	710	333,744
2002	4,651	1,328	8,663	7,046	72,477	128,528	13,888	11,761	38,691	40,065	339	635	726	328,802
2003	4,629	1,417	8,650	7,117	73,905	130,927	13,940	12,038	40,287	40,496	335	701	758	335,202
2004	4,488	1,390	8,734	6,959	74,072	132,551	13,811	11,983	40,779	40,489	365	698	747	337,072
2005	4,501	1,340	8,557	6,892	76,346	133,760	14,145	11,967	42,110	40,827	320	712	699	342,176
2006	4,542	1,413	8,485	7,030	81,937	135,595	14,565	12,288	45,229	41,729	364	687	747	354,617
2007	4,553	1,389	8,868	7,146	84,387	138,436	15,285	13,248	49,028	43,649	355	725	794	367,864
2008	4,898	1,483	9,188	7,402	87,870	140,791	15,485	13,737	50,856	44,276	373	721	805	377,886
	rate per 1,000													
1981	15.9	15.4	14.1	14.9	14.6	13.9	15.5	17.6	18.6	14.7	22.4	27.5	...	14.9
1986	13.2	15.0	13.9	13.5	12.6	14.2	15.6	17.0	18.0	14.0	19.8	27.6	...	14.3
1991	12.4	14.5	13.1	12.7	13.8	14.5	15.6	15.3	16.5	13.5	19.7	23.5	32.6	14.4
1992	11.9	14.1	12.9	12.6	13.5	14.2	14.9	14.9	16.0	13.3	17.6	21.6	30.7	14.1
1993	11.1	13.3	12.5	12.1	12.9	13.8	15.0	14.2	15.1	12.9	16.7	20.9	30.8	13.5
1994	11.0	12.9	12.0	12.0	12.6	13.6	14.7	13.9	14.7	12.8	14.9	20.3	31.0	13.3
1995	10.3	13.0	11.6	11.4	12.1	13.4	14.3	13.3	14.2	12.4	15.4	21.1	29.6	12.9
1996	10.3	12.5	11.4	10.9	11.8	12.6	13.6	13.1	13.6	11.9	14.1	19.5	29.1	12.4
1997	9.8	11.7	10.7	10.5	11.0	11.8	12.9	12.6	13.0	11.3	14.9	17.4	28.8	11.7
1998	9.3	11.1	10.3	10.5	10.4	11.7	12.7	12.6	13.1	10.8	12.7	16.7	25.3	11.4
1999	9.5	11.1	10.3	10.1	10.0	11.4	12.5	12.4	12.9	10.5	12.4	16.2	27.5	11.1
2000	9.2	10.6	9.8	9.8	9.8	10.9	12.3	12.0	12.3	10.1	12.2	16.6	26.4	10.7
2001	9.0	10.1	9.6	9.6	10.0	11.1	12.2	12.3	12.3	10.0	11.4	15.0	25.2	10.8
2002	9.0	9.7	9.3	9.4	9.7	10.6	12.0	11.8	12.4	9.8	11.2	15.2	25.2	10.5
2003	8.9	10.3	9.2	9.5	9.9	10.7	12.0	12.1	12.7	9.8	10.8	16.5	25.9	10.6
2004	8.7	10.1	9.3	9.3	9.8	10.7	11.8	12.0	12.6	9.7	11.6	16.1	25.0	10.6
2005	8.8	9.7	9.1	9.2	10.1	10.7	12.0	12.0	12.7	9.7	10.0	16.4	23.0	10.6
2006	8.9	10.2	9.0	9.4	10.7	10.7	12.3	12.4	13.2	9.8	11.3	15.9	24.3	10.9
2007	9.0	10.1	9.5	9.6	11.0	10.8	12.8	13.2	14.0	10.1	10.9	16.6	25.4	11.2
2008	9.7	10.6	9.8	9.9	11.3	10.9	12.8	13.6	14.2	10.1	11.3	16.5	25.5	11.3

Note: Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories before 1991.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

2002.[2] Quebec was among the first provinces to experience increased births beginning in the early 2000s. If other provinces and territories follow the same trend as in Quebec, there could be a stable, or even reduced, number of births within a couple of years.

Total fertility rate

The total fertility rate refers to the number of children that a woman would have over the course of her reproductive life if she experienced the age-specific fertility rates observed in a particular calendar year. It is based on a compilation of the fertility experiences of many different cohorts of women in a given year. An advantage of the total fertility rate is that it is easily calculated, allows for annual as well as international comparisons, and is not affected by variations in population size or age structure. In 2008 the total fertility rate was 1.68 children per woman, up from 2007 (1.66)

2. Institut de la statistique du Quebec. 2010. *Naissances, décès et mariages par mois et par trimestre, Québec, 2001-2010*, website: http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/donstat/societe/demographie/struc_poplt/i210.htm, accessed March 9, 2011.

Table 2
Total fertility rate (number of children per woman), Canada, provinces and territories, 1981 to 2008

Year	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.	Canada
	number of children per woman													
1981	...	1.89	1.62	1.67	1.58	1.58	1.83	2.11	1.86	1.63	2.06	2.88	...	1.65
1986	...	1.80	1.58	1.53	1.38	1.60	1.83	2.02	1.84	1.61	1.96	2.87	...	1.59
1991	1.44	1.86	1.59	1.56	1.65	1.69	1.98	2.05	1.90	1.68	2.17	2.45	3.55	1.72
1992	1.41	1.85	1.59	1.56	1.67	1.68	1.93	2.05	1.87	1.67	1.94	2.30	3.39	1.71
1993	1.32	1.77	1.57	1.53	1.64	1.67	1.97	1.99	1.82	1.64	1.92	2.23	3.50	1.68
1994	1.34	1.74	1.54	1.55	1.64	1.67	1.98	1.98	1.82	1.64	1.73	2.23	3.50	1.69
1995	1.28	1.79	1.52	1.51	1.62	1.67	1.96	1.92	1.80	1.62	1.85	2.35	3.42	1.67
1996	1.31	1.74	1.52	1.46	1.61	1.61	1.90	1.91	1.75	1.56	1.70	2.24	3.39	1.63
1997	1.28	1.66	1.46	1.45	1.54	1.54	1.83	1.87	1.70	1.49	1.86	2.03	3.39	1.57
1998	1.24	1.60	1.44	1.47	1.49	1.55	1.84	1.88	1.73	1.46	1.63	1.99	3.02	1.56
1999	1.30	1.63	1.46	1.44	1.47	1.54	1.83	1.88	1.73	1.43	1.61	1.94	3.27	1.54
2000	1.30	1.58	1.41	1.42	1.45	1.49	1.82	1.84	1.66	1.40	1.64	2.03	3.19	1.51
2001	1.30	1.55	1.40	1.41	1.50	1.53	1.82	1.90	1.67	1.40	1.57	1.84	3.08	1.54
2002	1.31	1.49	1.38	1.40	1.47	1.48	1.81	1.84	1.69	1.39	1.56	1.89	3.02	1.51
2003	1.33	1.60	1.39	1.43	1.50	1.51	1.82	1.88	1.74	1.42	1.50	2.05	3.09	1.54
2004	1.32	1.58	1.41	1.42	1.50	1.53	1.79	1.86	1.74	1.43	1.63	2.02	2.96	1.55
2005	1.36	1.54	1.40	1.43	1.54	1.54	1.84	1.87	1.74	1.44	1.41	2.07	2.72	1.57
2006	1.41	1.65	1.40	1.48	1.65	1.55	1.89	1.91	1.81	1.47	1.61	2.01	2.82	1.61
2007	1.45	1.63	1.48	1.52	1.68	1.57	1.96	2.03	1.90	1.51	1.58	2.11	2.97	1.66
2008	1.58	1.73	1.54	1.59	1.74	1.58	1.96	2.05	1.92	1.51	1.64	2.08	2.98	1.68

Notes: Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated. Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories before 1991.
Data by age of mother not available in Newfoundland and Labrador before 1991.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

and 2006 (1.61). This was the highest total fertility rate in Canada since 1994. Despite the increase, the total fertility rate remains below the replacement level of approximately 2.1 children per woman, which is required to replace the population in the absence of migration.

Between 2006 and 2008, the total fertility rate followed the national pattern of increase in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Nunavut compared with 2005. The other provinces and territories experienced some fluctuation. There were increases from 2007 to 2008 for most provinces and territories except for Manitoba and British Columbia (stable) and a slight decrease for the Northwest Territories. The provinces and territories that were at, or exceeded, the national average in 2008 were Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Throughout the 2006 to 2008 period, the total fertility rate was highest in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories (Table 2). In particular, in Nunavut it was very close to three children per woman in 2008 (2.98) and was also high in the Northwest Territories (2.08). In 2007 and 2008, Saskatchewan was the only province to have a total fertility rate higher than two children per woman, with rates of 2.03 and 2.05, respectively. In Quebec, the total fertility rate was 1.74 in 2008 and more recent provincial data for Quebec showed it remained stable in 2009, following a number of years of sustained increase. The total fertility rate was higher in Quebec than in Canada as a whole since 2006 but was lower in the previous years between 1960 and 2005.[3] British Columbia had the lowest total fertility rate in 2008 (1.51).

At the subprovincial level, there was much variation in the total fertility rate of census metropolitan areas in 2008 (Table 3). Overall, the total fertility rate in census metropolitan areas (1.59) was below the national average (1.68) while that in non-census metropolitan areas was above (1.90). The lowest total fertility rates were found in the census metropolitan areas of Victoria (1.33) and Vancouver (1.36) and the highest was found in Abbotsford-Mission (2.02).

Internationally, some countries have total fertility rates that are lower than that in Canada. For example, the total fertility rate in 2008 was below that of Canada in Hungary (1.35), Japan (1.37), Germany (1.38) and Italy (1.41).[4] Although still below replacement level, the fertility rate in a number of European countries was higher than that of

3. Institut de la Statistique du Québec. 2010. *Le bilan démographique du Québec*, Édition 2010.
4. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2010. Total Fertility Rates in *OECD Factbook 2010*, accessed March 10, 2011.

Canada: Belgium (1.82), Denmark (1.89), Sweden (1.91), Norway (1.96), United Kingdom (1.96) and France (2.00). In the United States, the preliminary total fertility rate in 2009 was 2.01.[5] The two most populous countries of the world, China and India, with populations of 1.3 billion and 1.2 billion, respectively, had total fertility rates in 2006 of 1.78 and 2.54, respectively.[6] The total fertility rate in the least industrialized countries was 4.5 children per woman overall, and some countries, particularly in Africa, had very high levels of fertility. The highest reported total fertility rate was in Niger, a country of 15.9 million people in Western Africa, with a total fertility rate of 7.4 children per woman.[7]

Age of mother at childbearing and birth order

Close to half (44.1%) of the 377,900 births in Canada in 2008 were first births. More than one-third (35.2%) of babies born were second order births, and about one-fifth (20.7%) were third or higher order. In 2008, the average age of mothers at the birth of their children was 29.8 years and for first-time mothers it was 28.1 years (Figure 2). The transition of childbearing to older ages that began several decades ago—in the mid 1960s the average age of first birth was 23.5 years—has continued into the new millennium. Among the reasons which account for the delay in childbearing are the pursuit of higher levels of education, labour force participation, and delayed union formation. There were some provincial and territorial differences with the youngest average age of mother at first birth in Nunavut (22.1 years) and highest in British Columbia (28.9 years).

Table 3
Total fertility rate by census metropolitan area, Canada, 2008

Census metropolitan area	Province	Total fertility rate
Abbotsford-Mission	British Columbia	2.02
Barrie	Ontario	1.89
Ottawa-Gatineau, Quebec part	Quebec	1.83
Guelph	Ontario	1.82
Regina	Saskatchewan	1.82
Calgary	Alberta	1.80
Edmonton	Alberta	1.78
Saguenay	Quebec	1.73
Saskatoon	Saskatchewan	1.72
Trois-Rivières	Quebec	1.70
Saint John	New Brunswick	1.69
Montréal	Quebec	1.66
Oshawa	Ontario	1.65
Québec	Quebec	1.63
Sherbrooke	Quebec	1.62
St. John's	Newfoundland and Labrador	1.61
Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo	Ontario	1.61
Brantford	Ontario	1.60
Winnipeg	Manitoba	1.60
Hamilton	Ontario	1.59
Peterborough	Ontario	1.57
London	Ontario	1.57
Moncton	New Brunswick	1.56
Greater Sudbury	Ontario	1.56
Windsor	Ontario	1.54
Toronto	Ontario	1.54
Kelowna	British Columbia	1.54
Ottawa-Gatineau, Ontario part	Ontario	1.53
St. Catharines-Niagara	Ontario	1.49
Kingston	Ontario	1.48
Thunder Bay	Ontario	1.48
Halifax	Nova Scotia	1.43
Vancouver	British Columbia	1.36
Victoria	British Columbia	1.33
Census metropolitan areas		1.59
Non-census metropolitan areas		1.90
Canada		1.68

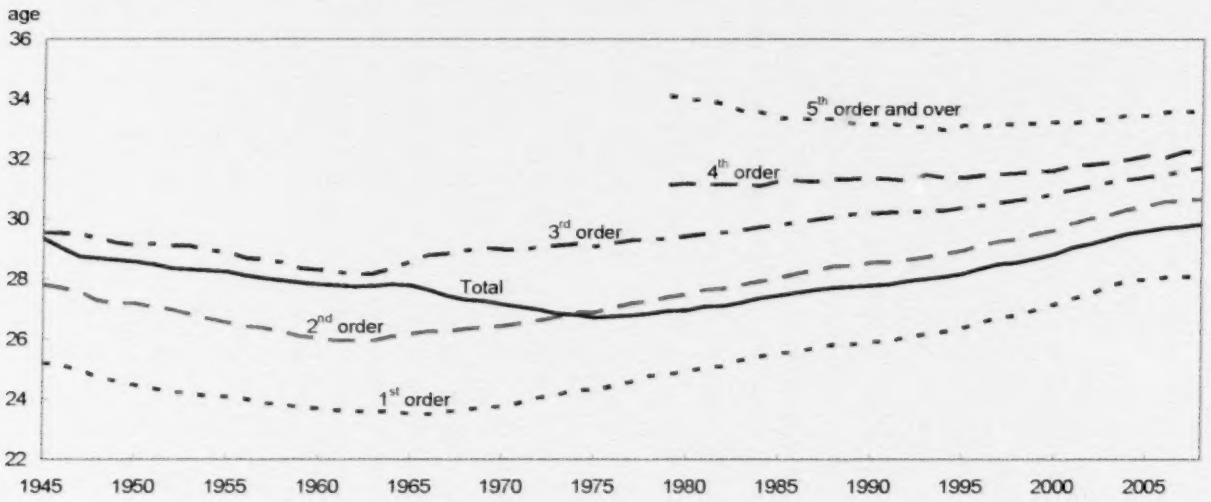
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

Childbearing is becoming increasingly concentrated in the late twenties to early thirties. The average ages of mother at second and higher order births are all in the early thirties. At the second birth, the average age of mother in 2008 was 30.7 years, at the third birth it was 31.7 years, at the fourth birth it was 32.2 years and at the fifth or higher order birth it was 33.6 years. There has been increasing compression of childbearing over the past century. In 1979, there was nearly a 10 year gap between the average age at first birth (24.8 years) and fifth birth or higher (34.1 years). By 2008, this gap had narrowed to 5.5 years (28.1 years and 33.6 years as the average ages at the first birth and order five or more, respectively). About half of all births in 2008 were to women aged 30 and older (49.6%), more than double that from 1981 (23.6%), which results in a higher average age at motherhood.

In 2008, 4.1% of all births in Canada were to young women aged 15 to 19 and this share has been less than 5% since 2001. Historically, about 6% to 7% of all births for the data observed from the 1920s to the mid 1950s were to 15 to 19 year olds, increasing to between 10% and 12% from the mid 1960s to the late 1970s and then declining again during the past several decades.[8] During the period from the mid 1970s to the late 1990s there

5. B.E. Hamilton, J.A. Martin, S.J. Ventura. United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010. *Births: Preliminary Data for 2009*, National Vital Statistics Reports, Volume 59 (3).
6. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2010. Total Fertility Rates in *OECD Factbook 2010*, accessed March 10, 2011.
7. Population Reference Bureau. 2010. *2010 World Population Data Sheet*.
8. Romaniuc, A. 1984. *Fertility in Canada: From baby-boom to baby-bust*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-524E.

Figure 2
Average age of mother by birth order, Canada, 1945 to 2008



Note: Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

were more births to women in their late teens than there were induced abortions although the differential narrowed over time. Beginning in 1997 until 2005, the last year for which abortion data are available, there were more induced abortions than births for 15 to 19 year old women.[9]

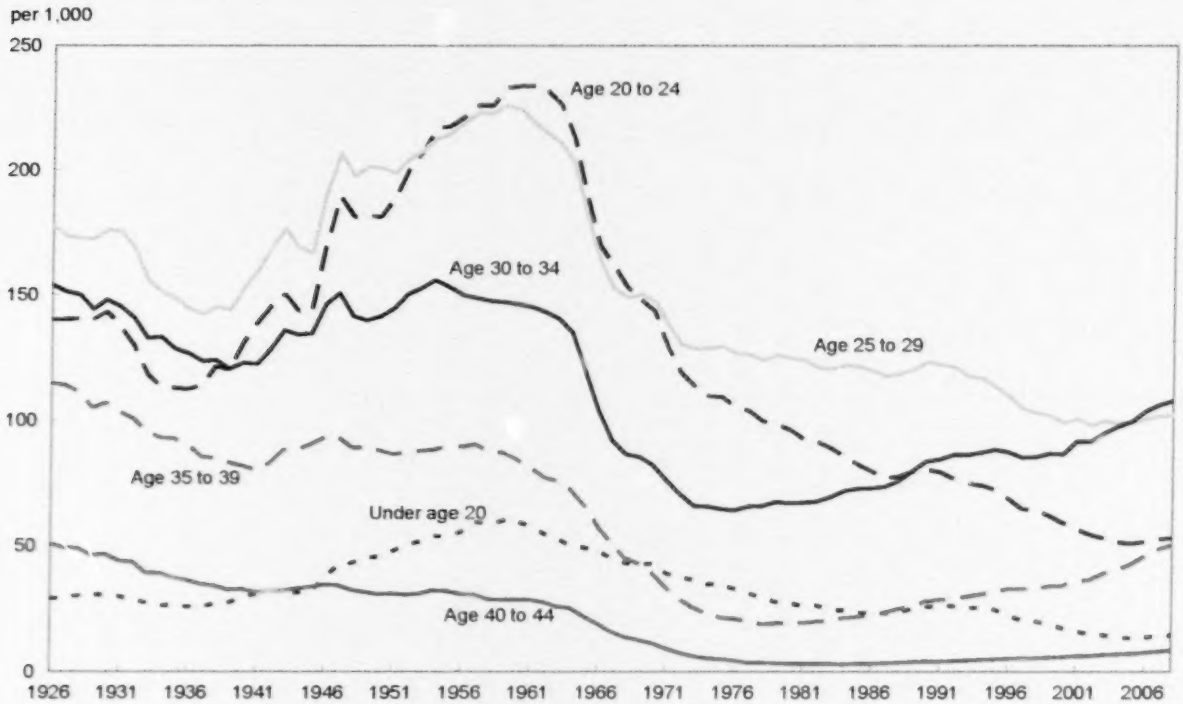
At the provincial and territorial level in 2008, Nunavut had the highest share of all births that were to young women aged 15 to 19: more than one-fifth of all births (22.1%). Among the provinces, the percentage of all births to 15 to 19 year olds was highest in Saskatchewan (9.8% of all births) and Manitoba (8.6%) and was lowest in Quebec (2.4%) and Ontario (3.4%).

Age-specific fertility rates

In 2008, the age-specific fertility rate increased for all age groups under 45 years compared to the preceding year, a pattern that has persisted for the past several years. The trend that began in 2005 of a higher fertility rate for women aged 30 to 34 than for women aged 25 to 29 continued to 2008 and the gap between these two age groups has widened (Figure 3). In 2008, the age-specific fertility rate for women in their early thirties was 107.4 births per 1,000 women—a level not exceeded since the end of the baby boom in 1965—up from 106.0 births per 1,000 women in 2007 and 103.3 births per 1,000 women in 2006 (Table A1). In 2008, the age-specific fertility rate for women aged 25 to 29 years was 102.0 births per 1,000 women up from 101.6 births per 1,000 women in 2007 and 100.5 births per 1,000 women in 2006. The age-specific fertility rates of women in their early twenties and women in their late thirties have also been converging largely due to the increase for those in their late thirties. In 2008, it was 50.1 births per 1,000 women for those aged 35 to 39, up from 48.5 in 2007 and 45.8 in 2006. The rate for women in their late thirties has been steadily increasing since 1979, is more than double the low of 18.8 in 1978, and is the highest rate since 1967. In contrast, the fertility rate for women in their early twenties, after peaking at 233.6 births per 1,000 women in 1960 and 1961, had an overall decline to 50.7 in 2005 before slight increases over the past several years to 53.0 in 2008.

9. Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 106-9002.

Figure 3
Fertility rate by age group, Canada, 1926 to 2008



Note: Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

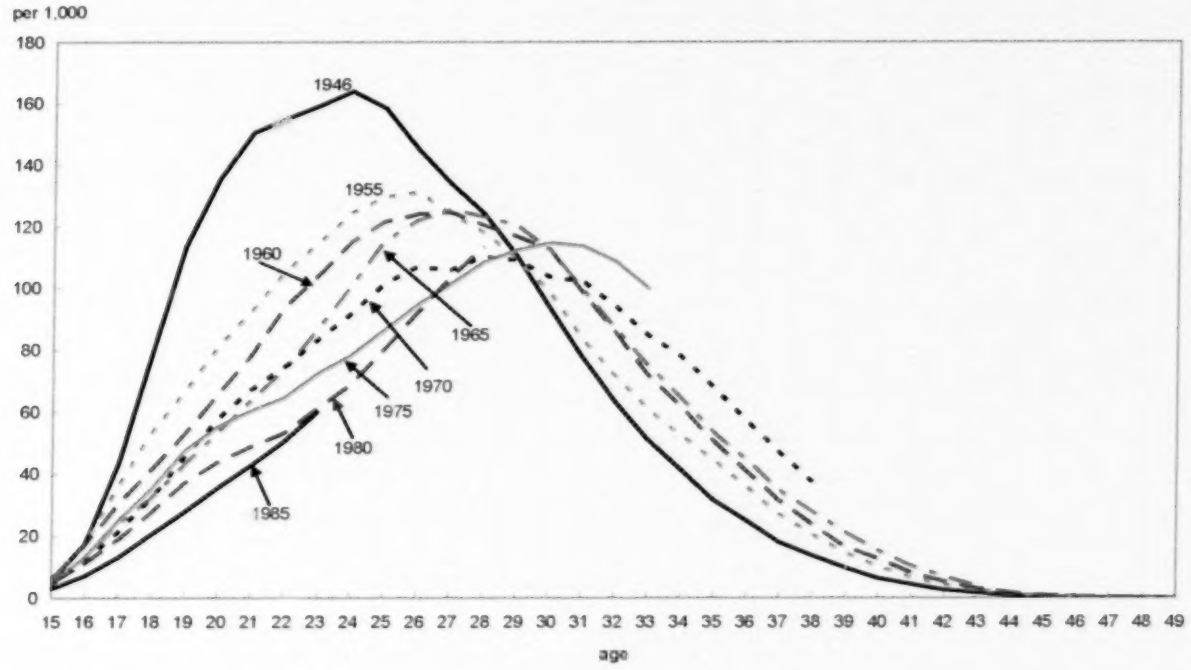
The gap has also narrowed between one of the older age groups of women (40 to 44 year olds) and the youngest age group (under age 20). In the late 1990s, the fertility of women in their early forties was roughly one-quarter that of young women under age 20, but in 2008 it was more than half (8.4 and 14.3 births per 1,000 women in each respective age group). After a steady decline from 25.2 births per 1,000 women since 1994, the age-specific fertility rate for young women less than 20 years old increased during the past few years. Historically, the age-specific fertility rate for young women under age 20 was high throughout the late 1940s through to the 1960s and in 1959—the peak of the baby boom—it was 59.7 births per 1,000 women, more than four times the 2008 rate for this age group. In general, the period throughout the 1980s to the present has seen the lowest age-specific fertility rates for this age group in the data collected since 1926. In fact, the age-specific fertility rate for young women under age 20 in the late 1920s was about double the current rate.

Although the age-specific fertility rates increased in 2008 for almost all age groups of women compared to 2007, it remained stable for 45 to 49 year olds. The fertility rate of both 40 to 44 year olds and 45 to 49 year olds was higher earlier in the last century than it is today. During that era, contraception was less effective and most childbearing took place within the context of marriage, therefore, exposure to childbearing would have continued throughout a woman's reproductive years for the duration of the marriage.

Completed fertility rate of recent cohorts

The total fertility rate is a frequently used indicator of fertility trends because of its ease of calculation and its ability to represent data for a given calendar year. The disadvantage, however, is that it can be influenced by fluctuations

Figure 4
Fertility rate by age for selected cohorts, Canada

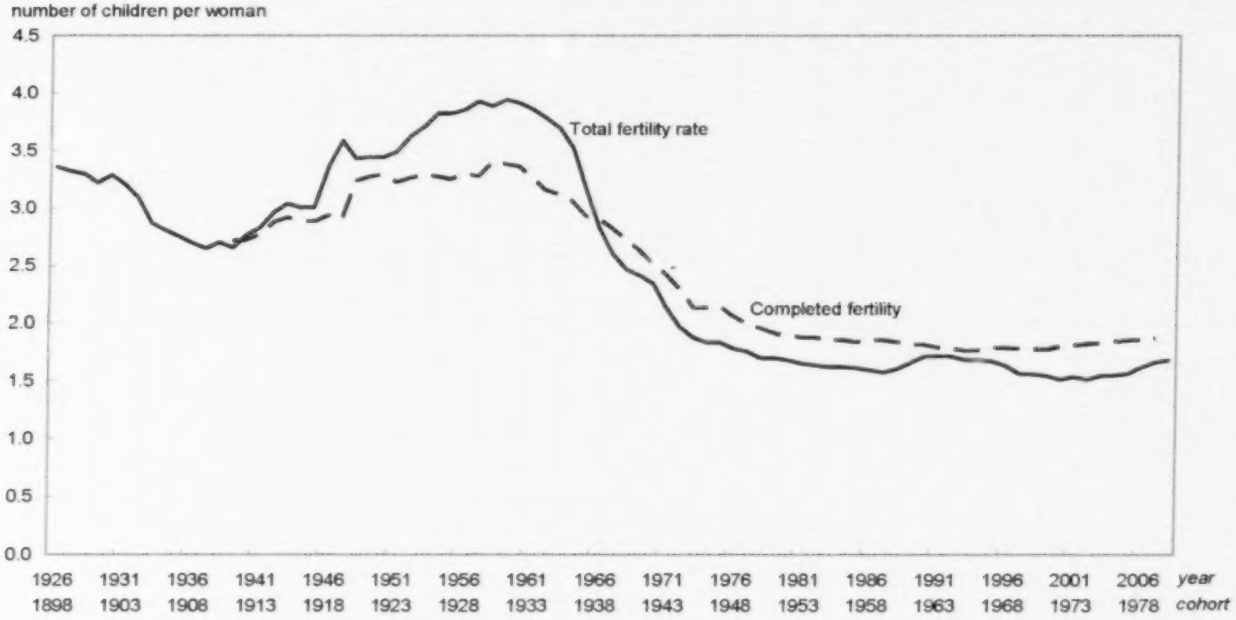


Note: Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

in the timing or tempo of childbearing. In contrast, the completed fertility rate, which refers to the actual fertility experiences of cohorts of women who are no longer in their reproductive years, is a longitudinal approach. It can provide an indication of the tempo of childbearing, that is, the age and intervals at which women give birth to their children as well as the level of childbearing. The disadvantage is that it takes many years to obtain the data required to produce this indicator for a given cohort. The completed fertility rate for women born up to 1960 can be calculated for 2008, as they would be aged 48 and very few births take place after this age. It is also possible to estimate the completed fertility rate of the 1970 birth cohort, aged 38 years in 2008, whose fertility rates have peaked. The estimated completed fertility rate for more recent cohorts introduces a higher degree of uncertainty as more of their childbearing years are based on extrapolation of the recent trends. Therefore, only the observed fertility rates for cohorts born after 1970 will be analysed.

The first cohort of baby boom women, born in 1946, is often taken as a benchmark as it was the last cohort to have achieved replacement level fertility in Canada (2.1 children per woman). These women had much higher levels of fertility throughout their late teens and early twenties compared to more recent generations, but this level fell fairly rapidly by their early thirties and is actually lower at this age than the succeeding cohorts of women. Indeed, the fertility of these recent cohorts (born from 1970 onward), while lower than the 1946 cohort until about age 28 (fluctuating somewhat at age 29 and 30) has surpassed that of all earlier cohorts of women at age 31 and older (Figure 4). For example, the fertility level of the cohort born in 1970, and who have therefore not yet completed their reproductive years, was 37.4 births per 1,000 women aged 38 years in 2008, which is higher than earlier cohorts when they were the same age. This rate is nearly triple that of the 1946 cohort (13.6 births per 1,000 women), an important change given that the difference between the generations is less than 25 years. At age 33, the fertility rate of the 1975 cohort was 99.9 births per 1,000 women, nearly double that of the 1946 cohort (51.0 births per 1,000 women).

Figure 5
Total fertility rate, 1926 to 2008 and completed fertility rate, 1911 to 1979



Note: Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated.
Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

The peak fertility for more recent cohorts is lower and shifting toward older ages, reflecting a lower number of births overall as well as delayed childbearing. The 1965 cohort peaked at age 27 with a fertility rate of 125.4 births per 1,000 women while the 1970 cohort peaked at an older age (age 28) with 110.1 births per 1,000 women. The highest fertility rate of the 1975 cohort occurred at an even older age (30 years) and with a fertility rate of 114.7 births per 1,000 women. Higher fertility rates of women throughout their thirties, however, does not compensate for lower fertility rates while in their twenties. This results in a lower overall completed fertility as women cannot simply "catch up" by having higher fertility rates at older ages. Future years of data will indicate if their rate surpasses that of earlier cohorts or if the curve continues to fall in overall height, to shift to older ages or both.

A comparison of the total fertility rate and the completed fertility rate over the past century shows the same overall pattern of higher fertility during the baby boom and subsequent lower fertility in the following decades although there is more fluctuation for the total fertility rate, primarily related to the tempo of fertility as women delay childbearing until increasingly older ages (Figure 5). The total fertility rate was higher than the completed fertility rate during the 1940 to 1965 period owing to an increase in the number of children per woman, a tendency to bear children at younger ages and shorter intervals, and an element of making up for delays caused by the war.[10] The last time the total fertility rate was higher than the completed fertility rate was 1965 for the 1937 birth cohort. During this year, the total fertility rate was 3.16 and the completed fertility rate was 2.92. Since 1966, the completed fertility rate has exceeded that of the total fertility rate. While the total fertility has been increasing since 2003, the completed fertility rate has increased slightly each year since 2000.

10. Romaniuc, A. 1984. *Fertility in Canada: From baby-boom to baby-bust*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 91-524E.

Table A1

Fertility rate by age group (for 1,000 women), Canada, provinces and territories, 1981 to 2008

Age group	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.	Canada
	per 1,000 women													
1981														
Less than 20 years	..	33.3	35.3	35.2	14.9	22.6	40.1	49.2	42.9	28.1	65.1	113.6	..	26.1
20 to 24 years	..	106.8	101.6	112.7	84.9	84.2	105.0	135.0	106.8	92.5	132.0	165.6	..	92.3
25 to 29 years	..	133.3	112.6	116.3	128.8	118.3	129.1	147.3	131.0	117.5	122.8	145.7	..	123.9
30 to 34 years	..	72.5	56.6	53.3	67.2	67.4	67.8	69.0	70.6	67.2	76.9	93.0	..	67.0
35 to 39 years	..	26.1	15.3	15.5	18.1	20.1	20.2	19.6	20.5	18.8	18.3	45.4	..	19.2
40 to 44 years	..	4.0	2.9	2.6	2.7	3.3	3.9	4.1	3.7	2.8	0.0	10.8	..	3.2
45 years and over	..	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	2.1	..	0.1
1986														
Less than 20 years	..	32.6	27.7	29.2	15.0	19.9	36.9	46.2	34.8	21.6	32.2	113.6	..	23.1
20 to 24 years	..	90.6	84.3	92.6	70.2	73.0	91.6	118.1	96.3	81.6	106.2	166.6	..	79.5
25 to 29 years	..	127.3	115.8	116.1	112.4	119.9	130.4	142.0	130.1	115.9	134.5	144.2	..	119.7
30 to 34 years	..	74.8	69.0	52.7	59.7	79.3	80.0	75.1	83.2	76.4	78.4	99.8	..	72.9
35 to 39 years	..	29.4	18.0	14.7	17.2	25.1	24.5	22.0	24.4	25.1	37.3	36.8	..	22.3
40 to 44 years	..	4.6	2.8	2.1	2.5	3.6	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.5	2.8	11.9	..	3.2
45 years and over	..	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.6	..	0.1
1991														
Less than 20 years	31.0	34.4	31.4	31.1	17.5	22.5	45.0	47.2	39.0	25.5	45.4	82.2	159.8	26.2
20 to 24 years	80.8	86.1	80.6	91.7	80.8	68.1	97.8	112.5	94.4	78.0	123.2	130.7	247.6	79.2
25 to 29 years	101.0	137.3	111.8	111.9	129.5	119.2	132.8	140.8	124.5	113.1	132.3	129.1	150.3	122.1
30 to 34 years	57.8	80.9	69.5	59.9	78.0	92.1	88.2	80.5	86.9	84.9	89.1	106.9	94.8	84.4
35 to 39 years	16.2	30.5	22.1	15.2	23.0	33.3	27.8	24.8	31.2	30.6	34.9	40.5	50.7	28.4
40 to 44 years	2.4	3.5	2.9	1.7	3.0	4.6	4.3	3.1	4.2	4.5	7.9	5.4	8.3	3.9
45 years and over	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.1
1996														
Less than 20 years	23.9	29.8	28.4	26.9	16.5	20.1	40.9	40.0	28.5	19.3	33.1	61.2	157.0	22.4
20 to 24 years	63.9	80.4	72.1	76.9	72.6	58.1	92.7	97.1	79.5	65.2	88.5	136.6	202.9	68.7
25 to 29 years	92.2	121.3	100.9	102.5	119.2	104.9	120.6	130.2	115.8	99.5	99.3	111.6	173.3	109.6
30 to 34 years	67.0	84.4	74.5	65.1	81.9	94.8	89.6	81.4	87.8	85.6	77.7	93.8	87.0	87.2
35 to 39 years	16.5	29.1	24.6	18.8	27.4	38.5	30.8	26.7	32.5	34.9	33.6	37.6	45.4	32.6
40 to 44 years	1.9	2.4	3.3	2.3	3.9	6.1	5.4	3.9	5.0	6.2	7.3	10.6	10.8	5.1
45 years and over	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.0	1.2	0.1
2001														
Less than 20 years	17.9	17.4	16.6	20.1	13.5	13.0	33.1	32.3	21.2	13.2	25.0	45.9	120.4	16.1
20 to 24 years	55.1	63.9	56.9	68.8	57.5	48.1	81.5	93.3	69.1	47.3	86.1	101.8	213.9	56.5
25 to 29 years	91.2	109.8	91.9	98.8	109.1	96.3	113.7	128.4	105.9	86.3	82.5	93.7	124.6	100.4
30 to 34 years	70.1	86.3	82.8	69.7	84.5	99.2	94.1	89.9	94.8	85.7	81.5	77.1	87.7	91.5
35 to 39 years	21.8	25.5	27.6	21.2	28.6	41.5	34.9	28.6	36.3	39.1	29.4	40.6	40.1	35.7
40 to 44 years	2.7	4.5	4.1	2.5	4.4	7.5	5.5	4.5	5.9	7.2	8.9	9.0	20.2	6.1
45 years and over	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.1
2006														
Less than 20 years	16.6	12.4	14.8	18.5	9.4	10.5	30.2	33.8	19.6	10.9	19.1	40.7	118.3	13.5
20 to 24 years	56.8	61.1	52.4	64.3	52.1	41.9	79.3	85.4	67.5	42.9	73.2	90.6	173.2	51.4
25 to 29 years	92.8	103.3	86.4	100.5	113.5	92.3	115.9	124.5	112.6	83.5	85.8	111.9	131.5	100.5
30 to 34 years	80.5	101.8	86.4	81.0	107.0	106.3	101.7	96.7	107.5	96.6	87.5	97.5	79.4	103.3
35 to 39 years	30.2	44.1	34.4	27.9	40.9	50.0	43.2	35.9	47.3	49.8	46.8	49.6	42.3	45.8
40 to 44 years	3.0	5.6	5.1	3.0	6.0	8.5	6.7	5.1	7.5	8.8	7.4	10.4	13.9	7.4
45 years and over	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	1.5	0.2
2007														
Less than 20 years	17.0	17.0	16.5	19.8	9.7	10.8	31.9	35.3	20.8	10.7	16.6	35.7	116.6	14.0
20 to 24 years	57.8	57.3	53.3	67.7	53.0	42.5	82.0	86.8	69.2	44.4	51.8	108.7	195.2	52.5
25 to 29 years	95.7	100.5	91.0	103.9	114.7	90.7	118.6	133.6	118.8	84.9	104.3	100.6	124.9	101.6
30 to 34 years	85.7	104.9	92.4	81.5	108.7	108.0	106.0	104.0	112.0	99.5	94.6	111.0	98.0	106.0
35 to 39 years	29.5	40.5	37.2	27.9	43.9	52.6	45.1	40.6	50.9	52.2	39.5	56.0	42.0	48.5
40 to 44 years	3.3	4.7	5.1	3.6	6.6	8.8	7.4	5.1	8.5	9.6	8.3	9.7	12.1	7.9
45 years and over	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	1.0	1.4	0.2
2008														
Less than 20 years	19.4	15.4	18.7	20.8	10.1	11.1	31.3	36.4	20.5	10.7	26.3	31.0	117.8	14.3
20 to 24 years	65.2	67.1	55.2	70.7	54.3	42.5	81.8	91.2	67.9	44.3	55.3	105.1	203.5	53.0
25 to 29 years	99.6	110.7	92.6	104.1	117.6	91.2	116.2	131.1	118.2	82.3	94.4	101.5	134.2	102.0
30 to 34 years	93.3	94.3	94.5	86.1	112.1	107.8	107.8	105.5	115.5	99.1	95.4	106.7	88.2	107.4
35 to 39 years	33.2	50.1	41.0	31.3	46.4	53.6	46.5	40.4	52.4	53.4	47.3	58.1	42.0	50.1
40 to 44 years	4.0	6.0	5.5	4.4	7.1	9.4	7.5	6.0	9.0	9.8	9.2	13.6	11.8	8.4
45 years and over	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.2

Notes: Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories before 1991. Data by age of mother not available in Newfoundland and Labrador before 1991. Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.

Table A2

Total fertility rate by birth order, Canada, provinces and territories, 1981 to 2008

Birth order	N.L.	P.E.I.	N.S.	N.B.	Que.	Ont.	Man.	Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Y.T.	N.W.T.	Nvt.	Canada
	number of children per woman													
1981														
1st order	..	0.71	0.72	0.70	0.71	0.70	0.72	0.78	0.81	0.77	1.01	1.03	..	0.73
2nd order	..	0.60	0.54	0.60	0.57	0.55	0.61	0.67	0.61	0.55	0.67	0.76	..	0.57
3rd order	..	0.34	0.24	0.25	0.22	0.23	0.30	0.39	0.28	0.22	0.25	0.44	..	0.24
4th order	..	0.14	0.07	0.08	0.05	0.07	0.11	0.16	0.10	0.06	0.07	0.23	..	0.07
5th order and over	..	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.08	0.11	0.07	0.03	0.05	0.42	..	0.04
1986														
1st order	..	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.66	0.70	0.74	0.74	0.75	0.69	0.89	1.03	..	0.70
2nd order	..	0.63	0.56	0.56	0.49	0.57	0.62	0.65	0.64	0.59	0.62	0.81	..	0.56
3rd order	..	0.33	0.25	0.24	0.17	0.24	0.30	0.37	0.29	0.24	0.28	0.44	..	0.23
4th order	..	0.13	0.07	0.06	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.15	0.10	0.07	0.09	0.25	..	0.07
5th order and over	..	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.08	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.08	0.35	..	0.03
1991														
1st order	0.65	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.80	0.76	0.85	0.76	0.79	0.76	1.01	1.00	0.93	0.78
2nd order	0.52	0.65	0.54	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.61	0.67	0.64	0.58	0.70	0.74	0.95	0.58
3rd order	0.19	0.31	0.23	0.21	0.21	0.24	0.31	0.37	0.30	0.24	0.29	0.39	0.67	0.24
4th order	0.06	0.11	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.12	0.15	0.10	0.07	0.11	0.20	0.44	0.07
5th order and over	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.08	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.06	0.13	0.56	0.04
1996														
1st order	0.62	0.73	0.71	0.69	0.74	0.72	0.81	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.84	0.89	0.95	0.73
2nd order	0.49	0.60	0.53	0.52	0.57	0.57	0.59	0.61	0.61	0.54	0.53	0.71	0.81	0.57
3rd order	0.14	0.28	0.20	0.19	0.21	0.22	0.29	0.33	0.27	0.20	0.20	0.36	0.57	0.22
4th order	0.04	0.10	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.12	0.14	0.09	0.06	0.09	0.18	0.43	0.07
5th order and over	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.09	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.11	0.63	0.04
2001														
1st order	0.63	0.64	0.62	0.65	0.70	0.69	0.69	0.70	0.71	0.63	0.76	0.75	0.91	0.68
2nd order	0.50	0.59	0.51	0.53	0.55	0.55	0.61	0.62	0.58	0.51	0.46	0.53	0.74	0.55
3rd order	0.13	0.23	0.19	0.17	0.17	0.20	0.29	0.33	0.24	0.18	0.25	0.28	0.52	0.20
4th order	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.12	0.14	0.09	0.05	0.07	0.17	0.33	0.06
5th order and over	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.11	0.11	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.11	0.57	0.04
2006														
1st order	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.70	0.76	0.70	0.73	0.72	0.79	0.68	0.73	0.93	0.86	0.73
2nd order	0.52	0.64	0.49	0.53	0.59	0.56	0.59	0.61	0.61	0.53	0.61	0.58	0.69	0.57
3rd order	0.16	0.24	0.18	0.17	0.20	0.20	0.30	0.32	0.25	0.17	0.15	0.26	0.48	0.21
4th order	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.13	0.14	0.09	0.06	0.08	0.14	0.28	0.07
5th order and over	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.14	0.13	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.10	0.51	0.04
2007														
1st order	0.70	0.64	0.67	0.72	0.77	0.70	0.75	0.75	0.83	0.70	0.66	0.95	1.01	0.74
2nd order	0.53	0.60	0.53	0.53	0.60	0.57	0.61	0.66	0.64	0.55	0.52	0.58	0.64	0.59
3rd order	0.16	0.29	0.20	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.31	0.34	0.26	0.19	0.25	0.32	0.46	0.22
4th order	0.04	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.15	0.14	0.10	0.05	0.10	0.14	0.34	0.07
5th order and over	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.15	0.14	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.12	0.53	0.04
2008														
1st order	0.79	0.74	0.70	0.75	0.79	0.70	0.73	0.79	0.83	0.70	0.72	0.97	0.91	0.74
2nd order	0.55	0.62	0.53	0.56	0.63	0.57	0.62	0.64	0.65	0.54	0.53	0.58	0.70	0.59
3rd order	0.17	0.26	0.21	0.19	0.23	0.21	0.30	0.34	0.27	0.18	0.29	0.27	0.46	0.23
4th order	0.04	0.08	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.15	0.14	0.10	0.06	0.05	0.15	0.39	0.07
5th order and over	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.15	0.13	0.07	0.03	0.05	0.13	0.53	0.05

Notes: Nunavut is included in the Northwest Territories before 1991.

Data by age of mother not available in Newfoundland and Labrador before 1991.

Births to mothers for whom the age is unknown were prorated.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Health Statistics Division, Vital Statistics and Demography Division, demographic estimates.